

HIGHGROUND

COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

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Guardsmen
deployed since
Jan. 1, 2010:**

**818 Army
47 Air**



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**COLORADO
NATIONAL GUARD
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**
6848 S. Revere Pkwy.
Centennial, CO 80112-3904

PUBLICATION STAFF

MAJ. GEN. H. MICHAEL EDWARDS
The Adjutant General
MAJ. ELENA O'BRYAN
State Public Affairs Officer
MAJ. RENEE CUNNINGHAM
Chief of Public Affairs, TAG Staff
CAPT. DARIN OVERSTREET
Deputy PAO, JFHQ-CO
CAPT. MICHAEL ODGERS
Public Affairs Officer, COARNG
1ST LT. ANTHONY NORRIS
Commander, 104th PAD

CAPT. NICOLE DAVD
CAPT. KRISTIN HALEY
Public Affairs Officers, COANG
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Chief of Public Affairs, 100th MDB
MASTER SGT. CHERESA D. THEIRAL
Editor-in-Chief
DEBORAH GRIGSBY SMITH
Associate Editor
STAFF SGT. NICOLE MANZANARES
Layout Editor/Graphic Artist

Cover photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

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Diary of a deployed dad

By Army Capt. Michael Odgers

Colorado Army National Guard Public Affairs

What's the hardest thing you've ever done in your life? If you ask the question, you will get as many answers as people. Some will tell you of enduring a tragic loss or hardship. Others may describe putting themselves through college as a single parent, others earning an advanced degree. I can tell you the hardest thing I've ever done in my 42 years is to live one year of my life away from my wife and children.

Deployed servicemembers sleep in the mud, endure the heat without any respite and fight in heavy combat to keep our country safe. Some returned home permanently injured, while others have given the ultimate sacrifice. Others, like me, manned a desk and enjoyed all the amenities the Army has worked so hard to continually improve, therefore I can't compare my life to those who sacrificed so much. But one thing we all have in common is while we were there, our families were here.

When I deployed, I was just like other Soldiers: eager to do my part and contribute to the effort of bringing freedom and democracy to the Iraqi people. But I never knew how hard it would be to be away from my family and watch my four children grow up one picture at time.

The first time it hit me was the day before Father's Day 2008. My son, Jonathan, was celebrating his fourth birthday and I wanted to surprise him with a phone call at his birthday party. Well, as you might expect, a table full of presents is a much higher priority for a 4-year-old than anyone on the telephone.

While disappointed, I shrugged it off, understanding the attention span of a young birthday boy. I decided to talk to my wife, but due to her sister departing, I had only enough time to tell her I loved her, which added to my disappointment.

I chose to compete for my son's attention with his birthday cake and presents, and hands down, I lost. And yes, I was a sore loser. So while communicating my frustrations to my wife via e-mail, a coworker put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Happy Father's Day." Until that moment, I had forgotten what day it was.

I had to step outside to contain my emotions.

After I returned, he told me that a man's only true wealth is his children. He couldn't be more right.

How poor I felt that day.

But life goes on, and we continued our routines, both here and at home. Part of that routine consisted of the "guess what you missed" updates. I missed

my 18-month-old daughter Kiera's first words and her first steps. Though my wife relayed them to me, I'd missed some of my children's first epiphanies and words of wisdom. Some were very funny, while others were touching and tender.

My son came to this conclusion: "When I get really big, I will be too big for Papa to hold, but when he gets home I won't be too big for Papa to hold, because Papa is really big!"


My wife said to Kiera, "Give me those feet!" My 3-year-old daughter, Ariana, scolded my wife, saying, "No, those are her feet! They're stuck on. You have your own feet on, and I have my own feet!"

Ariana once told my wife adamantly, "When my Papa comes home, I am going to hug him and kiss him and never let go!" It may sound like something simple or even silly, but while you're separated these little phrases mean so much to a deployed dad. While the affections ran high upon my return, she did let go.

I think vicariously best describes it, this way I experienced my children's lives through e-mails and letters from my wife. Sometimes it was an e-mail with photos, other times it was a phone call. At my children's ages, no person on the other end of the phone could keep their attention for long.

However, I was fortunate enough to be home for the arrival of my fourth child, a daughter, and reacquaint myself with the rest of my family. From the moment my family met me at the airport, my third child, Kiera, a little more than 1 year old at the time, wouldn't let me hold her for more than a moment. She just started letting me hold her again, but not until it was almost time to go back.

Back in Iraq, I connected with family again by video chats at a Morale, Welfare and Recreation Internet café. Most of the time, my children would spend more time making faces at the camera, but at least I got to see those faces. I got to see the silliness of my children in grainy and choppy video and hear the sounds of their voices. While the eldest two were stretching the sides of their mouths with their fingers, I heard something new: Kiera remembered me and spoke my name to me for the first time. She leaned out of her mother's arms excitedly pointed at my image on the screen and repeated "Papa, Papa, Papa." Just like Father's Day I was overwhelmed with emotion. This time it was all positive emotions. It has been a year and a half since that moment and I can still see her face on that computer screen.

Children are indeed your only true wealth. So no matter how much you have amassed, guard them like a treasure, share them like a gift, and love them like you're deployed. 

Father knows best

By Army Capt. Michael Odgers

Colorado Army National Guard Public Affairs

If imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, then emulation has to be the highest form of love. Every father has felt the pride in watching his son dress in his father's clothes, or to hear his son say, "When I grow up, I want to be just like you."

But youthful aspirations frequently change, especially about the time the suffix "teen" is added to his son's birthday.

Only a few men choose to serve in the military. Fewer of their children follow their parents into service. Even fewer of them choose the exact professions of their fathers. And hardly any actually get their first commander's evaluation flight from their instructor pilot father.

Would that make that person the best of the best, or more accurately, a Best of a Best? It would if it was Warrant Officer Christopher Best, of 2nd Battalion, 135th General Support Aviation, and his father, Col. Joel Best, Colorado Army National Guard state aviation officer.

As fathers, we spend each day trying to improve the lives of our families and to live lives that will make our children proud. There can be no greater validation of this life-long endeavor than to have a son choose to follow in our footsteps.

That is exactly what Christopher did when he chose to become a Colorado Army National Guard helicopter pilot.

A commander's evaluation flight is the first chance a commander gets to review a new pilot's skills and establishes a starting level for the pilot's training progression. In addition to familiarizing a new pilot with training areas and standard operating procedures, it also provides a new pilot demonstrate his proficiency to the instructor pilot of his commander.

Commanders frequently delegate this task to a standardization or instructor pilot because few commanders are actually instructor qualified. Joel, who continues to serve as an instructor pilot in the UH-60 Black Hawk with more than 6,000 hours, was more than happy to conduct this evaluation on April 20.

"I estimate that less than one percent of Army Aviators have ever flown an aircraft with one of their children. So few people are able to remain in an aviation flying position and maintain a flight physical long enough for their children to actually be qualified and capable of making an event like this a reality," said Joel.

As sons gain their independence, it may take a little more from their fathers to impress them, but fathers are proud of almost everything their children do . . . their first words and first steps, graduating from first grade. . . . This was a first too: their first flight together, and it was clear Joel was a proud father.

Mother Nature and Joel's busy schedule almost prevented the flight from occurring, but after about two hours, the weather conditions improved enough for the father and son crew to launch. "I missed many firsts with my son because of my job and the passion HAATS required to make it successful. This is a first neither



Colorado Army National Guard Capt. Joel Best poses near an OH-6 helicopter with his son, 3-year-old Christopher Best, in 1990 at a Colorado National Guard counter-drug event.

Photo provided by Col. Joel Best, used with permission

of us will regret."

When father and son walked toward the aircraft, Christopher appeared calm. If he was at all worried about his first flight, he didn't show it. On the other hand, Joel was smiling from ear to ear.

Throughout the flight, Joel's pride was overflowing. Not only was he sharing his life-long passion with his son, they were enjoying it together for the first time, literally side by side. And Christopher was doing well, which made even that much more difficult for Joel to contain his glee.

"It was a special day getting to fly with him," said Joel. "I just keep smiling when I think about it. And I'm exceptionally happy that he had decent control touch. I was tickled pink he was able to do some of those hovering maneuvers and keep it in the ballpark."

On several occasions, Joel had to correct himself and refer to Christopher as "Mr. Best":

"Son – I mean Mr. Best – I want you to shoot this approach without drawing on more power. . . . That was great son, now I want you to – excuse me, I mean Mr. Best – . . ."

While Christopher may not have completely understood what it was like to be in the Army, or even exactly what his father did, he did know he was a helicopter pilot.

"Growing up in Gypsum, it was always cool as a kid to say 'My dad flies helicopters.' I didn't know he was the commander (of the High-Altitude Army Aviation Training Site) or all that he did. I just knew he flew helicopters and that was pretty cool."

Christopher had been exposed to the military all his life through his father's career. But didn't consider joining until the war in Iraq began. "The Iraq war kicked off while I was in high school and I knew I wanted to do my part," he said. "It had always been the Army. It was just a choice between the active Army or the Guard. As I college student, I realized that the Guard presented itself with the most options."

Christopher is the third generation of Bests to serve in the COARNG. His grandfather, retired from the Guard in 1984. Joel has fond memories of being able to fly his father as a passenger before he retired. Now before he retires, he has been able to fly with his son.


Christopher had originally enlisted as a medic because he felt that was the best way he could make a difference – and he wasn't sure about flying in his father's shadow – but after assisting in a search and rescue, and a trip to the aerial gunnery range and firing some excess ammunition from both a CH-47 Chinook and a UH-60 Black Hawk, he quickly changed his mind.

"I was ecstatic," said Joel, who admits he had quietly hoped his son would pursue that goal.

Joel never pushed his son toward any particular career. "I think if I had encouraged my son to be a pilot, it wouldn't have happened," he said. "This was something we talked about with both of our sons when they were kids, but being who I was, running HAATS and coming here as the state aviation officer, I knew it would put some pressure on him.

"You learn as a parent when you watch your children grow up, is if you're too forceful with directions or guidance you give them, suddenly they start thinking 'I'm doing what he wants me to do, not what I want to do,'" said Joel. "It's better to set the conditions for success and let them know you will be supportive in whatever they do – they need to get their on their own – so when things get tough they don't second guess their reasoning. ... It's not 'I'm here because my dad made me be here.' It's all me."

Christopher had no solid idea what his future with the National Guard would hold until he was selected to go to flight school. "Once I became I pilot, I knew I wanted to make a career of the Army Guard. Its great career and a great hobby – one I hope to enjoy for years to come."

While the profession he has chosen is the same as his father, the path Christopher takes is his own. However, all along that path, he will have his father's knowledge and experience – and the mentorship of the community that has been part of his father's second family for decades. 

The Family Unit



Coming home sometimes a long process

By Cheryl Montgomery
Colorado National Guard Family Programs

A chaplain once told me reintegration time for military members returning from deployment often can take as long as the deployment itself. For example, if a Soldier deploys for a year, the time necessary for him or her to reintegrate or "adjust" to life back at home and work may take up to 12 months, as well as a small army of networked professionals to help.

Multiple support systems including family, friends, other service members, employers, teachers and the entire network of military organizations are essential to helping those who have served make the transition back to home and duty. Taking advantage of these support systems can be the difference between thriving and just barely surviving.


One of the first opportunities for Colorado Soldiers and Airmen to better understand the reintegration process is the Colorado National Guard Family Programs' 30-day post-deployment Yellow Ribbon workshop. This one-day event occurs approximately 30 days after the unit's official homecoming. It provides the service members and their immediate family members the opportunity to spend face-to-face time with reintegration experts, including military family life consultants, education benefit counselors, TRICARE representatives, financial planners and veteran's benefit advisors.

The most recent workshop, held May 15 for the 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, also included an exclusive job fair with multiple employers ready and willing to hire veterans. Since a

majority of the unit would soon be coming off active duty orders, the job fair, along with some very appreciative potential employers, gave the returning Soldiers an edge on the job market. A few lucky Soldiers walked into the job fair with resumes in hand and were hired on the spot.

Soldiers and families alike who may have spent the past year developing the tight-knit camaraderie they've come to rely on when times got tough, now learn to use those skills together and home. Tough times may continue, even escalate when families are suddenly reunited after deployment Yellow Ribbon Workshops are a reminder those "battle buddies" are still accessible despite the geographical distance that now may be between them.

Although Soldiers and families may still be in the early stages of reintegration – often referred to as "honeymoon" stage – getting together with the unit 30 days after returning from war is an essential step to easing service members into the reintegration process. When the honeymoon phase is over, the service members and their families will have developed the life tools they need to tackle – with confidence – the tough issues that may be on the horizon.

However, as the chaplain also noted, it is not simply getting to the end of the year and calling it good that makes reintegration successful; it's acknowledging and accepting deployment has now become a part of family dynamics. 

Father follows son's *lead*

Father joins the Army National Guard after son

By Army Capt. Michael Odgers
Colorado Army National Guard Public Affairs

Those who spend any amount of time in or around the National Guard understand the feeling of family and community it brings to its members. That feeling of family often inspires the children of Soldiers to follow in a parent's footsteps and join themselves; but on this occasion a son inspired his father to join.

On Feb. 19, both father and son graduated together from the 168th Regional Training Institute's Warrior Leader Course; Sgt. Archie C. Cooley and his son, Sgt. Anthony B. Cooley, both from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 135th General Support Aviation, Colorado Army National Guard. The younger Cooley made the Commandant's List.

The two set down the same career path three years ago when Anthony decided to join the Army National Guard.

It was the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a desire to serve that led the younger Cooley to join the Guard. He also felt that joining the Guard would be a great way to gain some life experience, maturity and job skills.

Archie had always desired a career in the military, but a high school football injury dashed his hopes of an Air Force career. After 9/11, he wanted to join again but he exceeded the age for enlistment.

Throughout the enlistment process, Archie saw his son change. Anthony became more focused, more determined, more committed and competitive. He was committed to succeed at anything he set his mind to do. It was this change in Anthony that convinced Archie he still had a chance. He got that chance when the recruiter showed up at their home.

While Sgt. 1st Class Shannon Northup was there to sign the final paperwork for Anthony's enlistment, Archie asked, "What can you do for an old guy like me?" Northup advised that the enlistment age had been raised to 42. Cooley, 41 at the time, jumped on the chance and decided to enlist with his son. "I want to join then," he exclaimed.

Both father and son went to the Military Entrance Processing Station together and took the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery together, but the younger Cooley actually enlisted sooner because it took longer to complete waivers for the elder Cooley to enlist.

Because his age was close to the limit, the Army sent Archie to basic training as soon as possible. Anthony declined to go to attend training at the same time fearing the attention brought to the two of them would make it more difficult.

It was the enthusiasm of their neighbor, Sgt. Travis Little, also of 2/135th, that was influential in Anthony joining

the Guard and in choosing aviation as a career. That same enthusiasm for Army Aviation persuaded the elder Cooley to choose the same career path.

Archie went to Chinook Helicopter Repair School first and he couldn't help but brag about his son, who would soon follow. This praise put Anthony on the drill sergeants' radar.

The attention started the first day the younger Cooley arrived at school and dropped his bags. The drill sergeants started calling off names and paused at Cooley's name, then repeated it a few times for emphasis. Then they had him pull out his cell phone, call his father and give the phone to the drill sergeant, who talked with Archie while requiring Anthony to run in place and perform push-ups for "dear old dad."

Anthony realized how much the Guard changed him when he visited friends from high school. He had matured, become more disciplined and changed his priorities in life. "Knowing that you could be gone any second down range doing something makes you appreciate the little things you get to do every day," he said. "Family has always been a priority, but it is even more so now."


Archie, father of four, grandfather of four and husband of 26 years, feels that the Guard experience has changed him, as well. He has learned to appreciate his family even more so than he already did. "I just learned a lot about me as a person, both good and bad, and I learned to appreciate my family more."

Both Cooleys spoke of how they appreciated the feeling of family that the Guard provided.

"Everyone takes care of each other, I know all of my NCOs (noncommissioned officers) do everything they can to take care of me if I have a problem," said Anthony. "It's more like a family than a hierarchy from private to sergeant major."

When Lisa Cooley was asked what it felt like to have both a husband and a son in the COARNG she said, "Sometimes it can be a bit overwhelming but my heart is always beaming with pride knowing that my two men are serving their country side by side, father and son."

Lisa serves as a family support assistant for CONG Family Programs. It was that same neighbor, Little, whose enthusiasm convinced both father and son to join, who also persuaded Lisa to apply for the job, one he felt she would be well suited for. She applied and got the position.

Both Archie and Anthony have grown and learned things about themselves from their experiences in the Guard. While the actions of the son have inspired his father, what is more important is that this family has joined our Guard family and both are stronger for it. 

Colorado air ambulance company departs for Iraq

By Army Capt. Michael Odgers

Colorado Army National Guard Public Affairs


CENTENNIAL, Colo. (5/1/10) – The Colorado National Guard, friends and family will bid farewell to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th General Support Aviation, during a ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility on Buckley Air Force Base, Aurora, Colo.

An air ambulance company provides rapid evacuation of injured and wounded servicemembers and civilians from the battlefield to a medical treatment facility.

Company G, an air ambulance unit, will spend several weeks at

Fort Hood, Texas, training on specific theater training requirements as well as language and culture prior to departing to southern Iraq.

This new unit has been training for the deployment since it stood up in early March.

“We are all excited and ready to get our training over so we can get started on our mission. Once you get going full-bore, it’s a tough job, but it is one of the most rewarding ones in the Army,” said Capt. Bryan Munsch, Company G commander. “Being able to serve others is why I joined the Guard.” 

Honoring our heritage: A tribute to veterans By Arnie Snyder

On a gentle April afternoon, I join the friends and family of an Air Force veteran to honor his memory. Loved ones gather around a small shelter in the military cemetery, eyes drawn to a simple urn set on a low table. Acres of gray-white tombstones punctuate the bright green, neatly-mowed lawns. Arrayed in silent formation, symbols of the dead surround the living.

A near-dozen, mostly World War II veterans, officiate the ceremony on this sunny spring day at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver. Nearly all are in their 80s. Dressed in clean, freshly-ironed uniforms, they represent the several branches of the U.S. armed forces. The rite is time-worn and familiar to each – a commander, a chaplain, two color guards and a firing team. One person will double as the bugler.

Under Public Law 106-65, every eligible veteran may receive military funeral honors at the family’s request. The program is aptly titled, “Honoring Those Who Served.” Thousands of veterans have been honored in this way, as will thousands more. Each ceremony includes a playing of Taps and a personal presentation of a U.S. burial flag.

As this ceremony begins, the firing detail leader orders his team to attention and to present arms. The rest of the entourage take up solemn positions inside the shelter. “We are assembled here to pay a lasting tribute to our departed comrade,” intones the commander. As he and the chaplain each speak in turn, the service is personalized to the Korean War veteran, who passed away at age 77.

When the verbal tribute is finished, the firing team leader readies his soldiers. The sharp report of rifle fire disturbs the stillness of the cemetery. The men fire another volley, then a third. Mourners gaze at the American flag inside the shelter as the strains of Taps fill the melancholy air.

Unfolding and refolding the American flag is another well-practiced ceremony, which is performed by two officials. Into the folded flag are pressed three empty shell casings, representing duty, honor and country.

The commander grasps the triangle of cloth, fixes his eyes firmly on the veteran’s surviving son and walks to face him. Dropping onto one knee, he transfers his weight to its companion. In an embarrassing instant, the knee goes AWOL, and he nearly loses his balance. But the officiant recovers quickly. With a wry smile,

he softly apologizes for an event wholly beyond the control of an elderly man.

In the space of a split second, the commander’s obeisance has been transformed into more than a mere symbol. His momentary loss of dignity is personal, painful and . . . powerful. At 81 years of age, he still sacrifices for his country. Watching intently from a distance just inches away, I feel my eyes cloud with tears.


As he looks into the eyes of the grieving son, he speaks the words of dedication that always move me deeply: “On behalf of a grateful nation, I present this flag as a token of our appreciation for the faithful and selfless service of your loved one for this country.”

It all strikes me as an incredible irony. On behalf of the combined armed forces of the most powerful military in history, a representative of that force kneels meekly to offer his country’s flag to the family of a lone fallen veteran.

The generals and admirals of the country’s last world war have long since departed. The work of distributing honor to whom honor is due falls often to World War II veterans who were privates and seamen back then, barely old enough to go off to war. Some can barely hold a rifle anymore, but they embody the meaning of this ceremony in a profound sense.

We owe much to all of our veterans – dead or alive, old or young, and whether their war was popular or unpopular. Nearly every right and freedom we enjoy today has been defended on a battlefield. A veteran’s funeral with military honors is a simple, yet elegant way to pay tribute.

It also preserves our heritage, passing the memory of sacrificial service to the next generation of Americans. If a military funeral may not have been a priority for the veteran, are there children or grandchildren who could benefit from observing the ceremony? It’s a good way to keep our legacy from fading like the setting sun of that April day last year.

This Memorial Day, if you’re a veteran, be proud of your service and your legacy. And if you know a veteran, take a moment to say “thanks” for his or her sacrifice. As Americans we all owe a debt to the military veterans who have made it possible for our way of life to endure. 

Arnie Snyder is owner of Elder Life Advisors, Littleton, Colo.

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Colorado Guardsmen receives **Purple Heart**

By Army Staff Sgt. Scott Griffin
104th Public Affairs Detachment

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (5/15/10) – Colorado Army National Guard Sgt. Martin “Marty” May received the Purple Heart at a ceremony held at the Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church.

He was presented the Purple Heart by COARNG Commander Col. Dana M. Capozzella.

On Sept. 30, May was shot in the face while serving in Ramadi, Iraq as a gunner with Colorado’s 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery.

May was the only Soldier wounded in action during the unit’s deployment.

A sniper’s bullet struck him below his right eye and exited through his left eye. He was immediately medically evacuated to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, for emergency treatment. Follow-on treatments at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany were unsuccessful in saving his left eye.

May was also awarded an Army Commendation Medal and



Colorado Army National Guard Sgt. Martin “Marty” May is awarded a Purple Heart by COARNG Commander Col. Dana M. Capozzella at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church in Englewood, Colo., May 15.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Scott Griffin

a Combat Action Badge during the ceremony. His wife, Wendy, received a coin from Capozzella.

Also in attendance were COARNG Land Component Commander Brig. Gen. Robert Balster, COARNG Command Chief Warrant Officer Linda Blincoe, COARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Lousberg, 169th Fires Brigade Commander Col. Gregory Miller, 3-157th Commander Lt. Col. Al Morris and 3-157th Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Koob.

The Purple Heart is the oldest American military decoration still in use. Gen. George Washington presented the Badge of Military Merit to the Continental Army in the form of a purple heart on Aug. 7, 1782, to

recognize “not only instances of unusual gallantry in battle, but also extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way.” The U.S. War Department revived the medal on February 22, 1932, as the Purple Heart.



Colorado National Guard leaders help recognize female veteran

BROOMFIELD, Colo. (5/22/10) – The Adjutant General of Colorado, Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards, spoke at a ceremony, May 22 as Sen. Mark Udall and Congressman Jared Polis, both of Colorado, present a Congressional Gold Medal to Mrs. Josephine Kater Robinson for her service as a Womens Airforce Service Pilot in World War II from 1944-1945.

The Congressional Gold Medal was approved for the WASP by Congress January 6, 2009, in Congressional Bill S.614, and is now being presented to former WASP members across the country, both in person and posthumously.

The WASPs were not officially recognized by the military for their service until the 1970s, so this award, the highest award Congress can present to civilians, is an effort to honor them for their courage and bravery, as they led the way for women in aviation and in the military.

“I just loved flying. To me it sounded very fascinating and it was something I could do for the cause, to be a part of it,” Robinson said of the war effort. She trained as a WASP and was stationed at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas, which is now home to the National WASP World War II Museum.

WASPs were paid \$250 per month, with no benefits. “We went



Josephine Kater Robinson, 92, a World War II WASP, is congratulated by the Adjutant General of Colorado, Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards, at a ceremony May 22.

Photo © 2010, David R. Jennings, Broomfield Enterprise/Daily Camera. Used with permission

By Air Force Capt. Darin Overstreet
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

in not for the money; we went in because the boys were away, and they needed more help,” Robinson said.

The women had to pay for their lodging and food, and they pooled their money to ship home the remains of fellow WASPs who died in service, since it wasn’t paid for by the government.

“For me it is a great honor to speak at this ceremony,” said Edwards. “I am a fan of history and a pilot. Their service is truly incredible, as they broke many barriers and led the way for women and diversity in the military. While we, in the Colorado National Guard, celebrate 150 years of service to our state and nation, heritage has

never been more on our minds. It is critical to remember the efforts of all who have sacrificed to make this great nation.”

Congressional Bill S.614 states that more than 25,000 women applied for training, but only 1,830 were accepted and took the oath. Of those, 1,074 graduated from the Army Air Forces flight training course and received their Army Air Forces orders. WASPs were eventually stationed at 120 Army air bases across America.

During the existence of the WASPs, 38 women lost their lives while serving their country, but even still, their story was missing from the history of America – until now.



Colorado Guardsmen build hope in Southwest

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. (5/13/10) – The 240th Civil Engineer Flight of the Colorado Air National Guard recently began construction at St. Michaels Association for Special Education school.

It has been 18 months of planning and facility design for the Innovative Readiness Training team of the National Guard Bureau and the 240 CEF in partnership with the Southwest Indian Foundation for the reconstruction of the school.

The effort to upgrade the campus for special needs children and adults is part of the National Guard's Innovative Readiness Training program, a civil-military affairs program that links military units with civilian communities for community projects, which may otherwise be unfunded.

In the course of five years, civil engineering units from across the Air National Guard will spend their two-week annual training at SMASE to construct five new buildings across the campus.

"When I took a look at this project at St. Michaels, I said this was a no brainer, this is a perfect fit for our long-term training venue for our Air National Guard civil engineers," said Master Sgt. Charles "Chip" Stoyer, Innovative Readiness Training project coordinator.

The 240th CEF has been involved with this specific IRT program, implementing innovative planning and design ideas along with providing project management and overview, since the inception of this project almost a year and a half ago.

Members of the 203rd Red Horse Squadron, an Air National Guard unit based in Virginia Beach, Va., demolish the condemned dining hall at St. Michaels Association for Special Education in Window Rock, Ariz., May 19.

Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares



Members of the 203rd Red Horse Squadron, an Air National Guard unit based in Virginia Beach, Va., re-shingle a maintenance building at St. Michael's Association for Special Education in Window Rock, Ariz., May 15.

"Working with the IRT program is very similar to working in a contingency environment such as Afghanistan, Iraq or being deployed to another contingency area, where it is high paced and there are a lot of things going on and a lot of split decisions happening and trying to keep a team of 35 to 40 busy," said Maj. Ron Guert, 240th CEF senior technical lead engineer.

SMASE faces many challenges. Dilapidated structures such as classrooms, housing and therapy rooms were built without proper planning and will need to be repaired. The region's soil is full of clay and silt, which makes drainage difficult. Rivers of rain water flood the land and make deep grooves on the roads, making access to and from the school very difficult for staff and students.

"It's been exciting. We (NGB) are pumping well over a million dollars into the local environment through construction materials and labor," said Guerts. "The community is aware of what is going on out here at St. Michaels' slowly evolving campus, and now with this resurgence of energy and military personnel coming out, we are getting media attention. People are coming out to see the progress that we are making on the campus. The 240 CEF will benefit from the training we will get out here."

Working along with the 240 CEF is the 203rd Red Horse Squadron, a Virginia ANG unit that will start the second phase of the project with demolition of the old dining hall, re-shingling of the maintenance building, construction of a new nursing station and renovating facilities.



Colorado Guardsman named regional Soldier of the Year

By Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs



OAHU, Hawaii (5/2/10) –
Competing against seven other Citizen-Soldiers from six states and one territory, Colorado Army National

Guard Spc. Ryan Teeter, 24, from Westminster, Colo., won the 2010 Region 7 Army National Guard Soldier of the Year in the “Best Warrior” Competition.

Teeter represents Company D, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group.

“I am honored to represent my unit, my state and myself,” Teter said. “The entire competition was a really well-run operation with lots of good events and I am going to continue to strive forward and maintain a high level of physical fitness and hone in on my skill levels to continue to be a good Soldier.”

Accompanying Teter to Hawaii for the competition was COARNG Staff Sgt. Robert Henry, 33, from the 168th Regional Training Institute, Colorado Springs, Colo. Henry competed against seven noncommissioned officers for the NCO of the Year title. Although Henry didn’t take first place in the overall competition (won by Staff Sgt. Michael East of the California Army National Guard) he did take home first place in the written examination segment of the challenge.

“I’m glad I got to compete,” Henry said. “I’m really proud of Spc. Teter and how he represented the Colorado Army National Guard. Both Teter and his sponsor, Staff Sgt. (Michael) Shumate, are first-class individuals. What I got most out of Hawaii was seeing a bunch of top-notch NCOs and junior enlisted Soldiers really representing their states very well.”

Spanning the course of three days, the SOY and NCOY competition, held at Bellows Air Station and Schofield Barracks, put 16 Soldiers and NCOs through a gauntlet of activities and events that included everything from a 2-mile ruck march to a written test about general Army information.

“It’s all just a matter of being consistent across all of your events,”

(Above) Competitors in the 2010 Region 7 Army National Guard Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year “Best Warrior” Competition disembark a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter for a hands-on Army warrior task at the military operations in urban terrain site at Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii, May 1. (Below) Spc. Ryan Teter of Company D, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group, Colorado Army National Guard, fires off a round from his M4 light machine gun in the weapons qualification portion April 30.

Army photos by Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

Teter said. “I felt my strongest were the Army warrior tasks and the (appearance) board.”

One Soldier and one NCO were chosen from Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, and New Mexico to test their physical and mental abilities in seven warrior-task based events: a physical fitness test, a weapons qualification that assessed the Soldiers’ marksmanship with either an M16 or an M4 rifle, a day and night land navigation course, a hands-on Army warrior task course that was conducted at a military operations in urban terrain site, a written test and an appearance board.

“I spent more time studying for the appearance board than anything else,” Henry said of an event that was worth the most points in the competition. “It turned out to be 10 questions and eight of them were about current events.”

Accompanying Teter and Henry were their military sponsors, Shumate, also of Company D, 5/19th SFG, and Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Gonzales of Headquarters Company, 168th Regimental Training Institute, who cheered from the sidelines and mentored their Soldiers.

“As an NCO, you’re developing your team and your Soldiers and even though they are not training per se, they are being tested,” said Shumate, Teter’s noncommissioned officer in charge. “This has been a privilege to be my Soldier’s sponsor. I hope he gains more confidence and reinforcement so that he can function in these environments in the future.”

Teter will now compete in the 2010 Army National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition at Fort Benning, Ga., in August. If victorious there, he will move onto the Army Best Warrior Competition at Fort Lee, Va., in October.

“There are no losers at all here today. They (the competitors) are all winners and we can only pick one NCO and one Soldier to move on,” said COARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. Dan Lousberg, who observed and evaluated the competitors throughout the competition. “These Soldiers represent the best of the best we have in the Guard. I personally couldn’t be any prouder of both of our two COARNG Soldiers who laid it all on the line. Both Staff Sgt. Henry and Spc. Teeter are heroes I would readily trust my life with at any time.”



Colorado Airmen rock Guardian Challenge 2010

By Air Force Maj. Kristin Haley
140th Wing Public Affairs

BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (6/1/10) – Airmen of the 137th Space Warning Squadron, Colorado Air National Guard, participating as Team Buckley and the 460th Space Wing, took home the coveted Aldridge Trophy for the Air Force's best Space Operations Wing in Guardian Challenge 2010, the world's premier space and cyberspace competition.

Established in 1994, Guardian Challenge is a competition among approximately 300 Airmen from nine wings and one center, who compete from various locations, from March 1 to May 19. Professionals in space operations, space communications, spacelift, cyber operations, combat communications and security forces compete against each to establish the best of the best in Air Force Space Command.

"The best of the best gather at Peterson Air Force Base once every two years in hopes of claiming top competition honors," said General C. Robert Kehler, commander, Air Force Space Command. "Everything we do begins and ends with our contributions to the joint fight, and Guardian Challenge is a perfect opportunity to explore innovative ways to provide space and cyberspace capabilities to best meet the needs of joint force commander."

Maj. Jarrod Moseley and Capt. Stephanie Meyers, both Colorado Air National Guardsmen, represented the 460th Space Wing and won the Best Space Operations team.

The pair trained hard for this title, but it wasn't done alone. They had a whole team of behind them who contributed to their success. "This was truly a team effort in getting their operations team ready for the competition," said Col. Loren "Skip" Johnson, 137th SWS commander.

The team preparation, squadron run-off, 14th Air Force run-off and Air Force Space Command competitions were held at the 137th SWS headquarters in Greeley, Colo., and that alone took a team to make happen. Senior Master Sgt. Amy Bond and Capt. Ken Defeo were responsible for writing the local competition and preparation scripts, and Master Sgt. Philip Whitley tirelessly coached the two-man pair. In addition, their training required extra time in the trucks for all the available operators to allow Moseley and Meyers to concentrate on preparation and competition.

"Stephanie and Jarrod stand on the shoulders of our training and (vehicle) shops," said Johnson.

In addition to the Best Operations team win, 137th SWS members were three of the five competitors in the 460th Wing's Guardian Challenge team. Staff Sgt. Randall Fischer, Staff Sgt. Mario Hernandez and Airman 1st Class Devin Casteel helped take home the trophy for best



Members of the 137th Space Warning Squadron, 140th Wing, Colorado Air National Guard won best Space Operations team, best Security Forces Tactics team and take home Air Force Space Command's 2010 Aldridge Trophy as part of Team Buckley, May 21.

Courtesy photo provided by Air Force Maj. Kristin Haley, 140th Wing Public Affairs

Security Forces Tactics team in the competition.

The Team Buckley security forces team trained in Greeley for more than three weeks and were coached by 137th SWS security forces member, Tech. Sgt. Travis Silvers. Upon hearing the news of their win, Coach Silvers talked about what a good feeling and rush it was to win. "It's been an amazing trip and these guys have just been itching to win," he said.

"Again, this was a team effort and I can't say enough about the leadership of 1st Lt. Kenny Kemplin and Chief Master Sgt. James Hoefs. The competition training meant long hours for the rest of our security forces personnel as they picked up the slack that allowed Travis, Randy, Mario and Devin to be at the level to take the tactics trophy," said Johnson.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of this entire unit and it warms my heart to see them receive the recognition that I see them earn every day," said Johnson. "It is with a humble sense of pride that all of us serve, and today ... the 137th family is the 'best of the best!'"

"We are extremely proud of each of our folks who contributed to this success and proud of how they represented the best of the Air National Guard, the Colorado Air National Guard, the 140th Wing, and Team Buckley. You are outstanding men and women and congratulations," said Brig. Gen. Trulan A. Eyre, 140th Wing commander.



Combined Colorado Guard and Slovene team to mentor Afghanis

By Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (5/10/10) – Family, friends and fellow Soldiers were on hand at a departure ceremony at the Sparks Armory at Joint Force Headquarters-COLORADO to send off 12 Colorado Army National Guard Citizen-Soldiers in honor of their unique upcoming deployment to Afghanistan as part of an Operational Mentor and Liaison Team-Augmentation to train and mentor Afghan National Army troops.

The OMLT-A Soldiers, the majority of whom are combat veterans, will join 30 Slovenian soldiers in country for the six-month mission.

“Thanks for allowing us to volunteer,” said the commander of the OMLT-A to the family members in attendance at the ceremony. “Thanks for allowing us to go do what we are about to do.”

COARNG and Slovene soldiers will arrive in Afghanistan in early fall 2010 after a summer of training in Fort Polk, La., and Germany.

For Sarah Beatty, wife of Maj. Charles Beatty of the 89th Troop Command, this is the first time in her husband’s extensive military career that he has been deployed.

“We’re dreading that daddy is going to be gone but we’re proud of him,” Sarah said. “I absolutely have a support group though. My husband’s family lives here in town and we’ve been here for seven years, so I have friends and a ton of support from the family readiness office.”

Sgt. Nicholas Puetz, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry, will be making his fifth deployment in a 10-year career with this team. This will be his second trip to Afghanistan.

“This is going to be a lot of fun and it’s going to be intense at times, but it’s going to be good for relations,” he said.

The CONG and the Republic of Slovenia have become strong allies over their 17-year collaboration through the National Guard’s State Partnership Program.

The CONG SPP works closely with National Guard Bureau International Affairs, U.S. European Command, as well as the Slovenian Embassy, and strives to advance strong military-to-military and civilian-to-military




The Colorado Army National Guard’s Honor Guard presents the colors for the Operational Mentor and Liaison Team-Augmentation departure ceremony at the Sparks Armory at Joint Force Headquarters in Centennial, Colo., May 10.

Army photo by Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

foreign relations with select countries.

The OMLT-A is part of NATO’s International Security and Assistance Force’s contribution toward the development of the ANA. The ISAF’s military objectives include assisting the Afghan government to extend its authority countrywide by conducting security operations with the Afghan National Security Forces and mentoring the ANA.

The National Guard State Partnership program was established in 1993 in response to the radically changed political-military situation following the collapse of Communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The SPP provides Slovenia with access to experts within the state of Colorado on the full range of military to military, military to civilian and civilian to civilian activities. The intent is to build upon the relationships that have been developed over time with the Colorado National Guard. During this time military and civic leaders have been part of an exchange program focused primarily on Slovenia’s military and their pursuit of membership of NATO. Now that Slovenia is a member of NATO the intent is to do more exchanges to support one another and improve the strategic objectives of both Slovenia and the United States. 

Former Colorado Army Guard commander heads veterans court

By Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

On a mid-May day, Marc Gatliff, a 47-year-old former Army sniper from Colorado Springs, Colo., sat outside an El Paso County, Colo., courtroom reading a book waiting to see a former military judge in a new court specifically tailored to support combat veterans.

Four years ago, Gatliff began to get into trouble with the law. He blames the majority of it on his ex-girlfriend, whom he said was addicted to crystal meth.

Gatliff said his ex would physically assault him during meth binges. He would defend himself and she would call the police, which always ended up with him in jail.

This happened on numerous occasions and the veteran's compounding alcohol problem didn't help the situation.

Gatliff spent four months in the El Paso County jail for a domestic violence charge and then violated his probation due to confidential reasons, hence his visit to the Veteran Trauma Court.

In November 2009, this special court designed to provide alternative sentencing for combat military veterans accused of felonies, emerged in El Paso County, Colo.

"I think this is going to be a little stricter, but the rewards will be greater," Gatliff said. "I can get off earlier. There seems to be more opportunities and more criteria for my sentence."

Modeled after similar programs in Buffalo, N.Y., Orange County, Calif., and Tulsa, Okla., the court offers non-traditional punishments to veteran offenders based on rehabilitation rather than incarceration.

The driving force behind it all is El Paso County District Judge and former Colorado Army National Guard Commander, retired Maj. Gen. Ronald Crowder.

"The defendants that are coming back (from war) with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries are having problems that result from having gone in harm's way for their country," Crowder said. "Typically, they are self-

medicating and getting themselves into some pretty significant trouble. ... The district attorneys are willing to consider an option that will get them some help and also something to where they don't have catastrophic consequences on their records."

The court, funded by a \$2 million, five-year federal grant, deals specifically with combat veterans who have been accused of felonies other than murder, sexual assault, felony-level child abuse, felony

stalking, strangulation or crimes involving firearms, explained Crowder.

El Paso County Senior Deputy District Attorney Jeff Lindsey makes the call on which veteran offenders are appropriate for the court.

"We look at people and say 'Does this person deserve to be in prison or does this person deserve to be on probation?'" Lindsay said. "People that we think are probation-eligible are the cases that we take into veterans court. We try to get them out of jail and into treatment."

Lindsay said the court is currently dealing with somewhere between 70 and 80 cases and about half of the offenders are on active duty.

Offenders who come through Crowder's court an average of once a month for to check up on their status and to see if they're abiding by the terms of their probation.

This happens in the first phase of a two-year, three-phase program designed to get veteran offenders back on a successful path to recovery.

Phase one averages eight months to a year and includes several appearances in court, monitored sobriety and a heavy focus on treatment. Phase two involves less accountability but offenders are still supervised and expected to carry out the terms of their sentences. Phase three wraps up the program and could possibly result in an early release and, depending on the circumstances, the veteran's case being sealed from the general public.

"Part of the reward for going through this is a compression of sentence or an early termination," Crowder said. "If you are doing really well, we won't hold the anvil over your head as long."



El Paso County District Judge and former Colorado Army National Guard Commander Maj. Gen. Ronald Crowder discusses the Veterans Trauma Court in its unique judicial process from his chambers in Colorado Springs, Colo., May 11.

Army photo by Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

Mentoring veterans through the process are peer specialists – volunteer veterans placed with the offenders to guide and counsel them through the course of their probation.

“One of the common factors with a lot of the offenders is disorganization,” said Sheilagh McAteer, a deputy state public defender in El Paso County and one of the original creators of the court. “They are unable to keep appointments and multi-task, so those are some of the things that we anticipate peer specialists to be an advocate for. Also, we hope that they can be someone just to talk and relate to.”

Relating is something Crowder can do with the offenders. As a former Army paratrooper who served in the Vietnam War, he knows first-hand the horrors of combat and understands the predicaments they’re in, which may have partly resulted from their time in combat.

“We are willing to bend a little bit further for them in return for the defendant being much closely supervised,”

Crowder said. “The whole goal here is to lower the recidivism rate, which has tremendous advantages for society, and it’s great for the defendant too. We are seeing good success so far.”

Success through the system is something Gatliff hopes to achieve over the course of his sentence. A slew of appearance reviews before Judge Crowder await him. He’ll be subjected to random urinary analyses as well as some other terms of his probation, but considering the alternative, he’s glad to be where he is.

He also believes the court is a benefit to other veterans who’ve managed to get themselves into a bind.

“We, as combat vets, have different problems than the rest of society,” Gatliff said. “Someone has to address the issues going on with the troops. Everybody just wants to pay lip service to it.”

If you would like to volunteer to be a peer specialist for the El Paso County Veteran Trauma Court, contact Michael Bryant at (719) 633-4601, ext. 113 or

m.bryant@pppartnership.org. 

Two Colorado employers named finalists for 2010 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award

ARLINGTON, Va. (5/14/10) – Qwest Communications Inc. of Denver and the Adams County Sheriff’s Office of Brighton, Colo., have been selected as two of 30 national finalists for the 2010 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The award is the U.S. government’s highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the award, which was instituted in 1996 under then-Secretary of Defense William Perry.


Qwest Communications Inc., nominated by a lieutenant in the Navy Reserve from Castle Rock, Colo., and the Adams County Sheriff’s Office, nominated by a sergeant in the Army National Guard from Denver, were selected from more than 2,500 nominations submitted for the award. Thousands of U.S. employers were nominated for outstanding support of Guard and Reserve employees, which included providing full salary, continuation of benefits, care packages and even family support to employees fulfilling their military obligations.

From the 30 finalists, a national selection board comprised of senior defense officials, business leaders and prior Freedom Award recipients,

representing small business, large business and public sector employers, will select the 15 recipients of the 2010 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Recipients will be announced by the Department of Defense in early summer. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Washington Sept. 23, 2010, at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center.



About ESGR & the Freedom Award

The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). ESGR is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 whose mission is to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve Service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflict through mediation. Since 1996, only 130 companies have been presented with the prestigious Freedom Award. Previous honorees include Microsoft, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Sears, Home Depot, the State of Delaware, the Santa Ana, California Police Department and the family owned farm Augustine & Sons in Rose Hill, Iowa. For more information, please visit www.FreedomAward.mil. 

9Health Fair salutes Colorado Guard ...

DENVER (5/18/10) – Jim Goddard, chief executive officer of the 9Health Fair, accepts a lithograph celebrating 150 years of the Colorado National Guard at the KUSA Channel 9 studios in during a social event.

The 9Health Fair, a community outreach program of 9News, organized the event in order to thank its community partners.


The mission of the annual 9Health Fair is to promote health awareness across the state and encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own health.

The Colorado National Guard has provided transportation and other logistical support to the event since its inception 30 years ago.

Officially called Innovative Readiness Training, the program prepares units for their wartime missions while supporting the needs of the local community. The Colorado National Guard and the 9Health Fair have been community partners for 30 years.



Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral

Goddard is flanked by Colorado Air National Guard Col. Lorn “Skip” Johnson, commander of the 137th Space Warning Squadron; COANG Col. Theresa Z. Blumberg, chief of the adjutant general’s staff; and Colorado Army National Guard Lt. Col. Michael Delgado, land use agreement and IRT project manager. 

... and Colorado Guard salutes in return




Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. John Rohrer

GREELEY, Colo. (5/26/10) – The 137th Space Warning Squadron of the Colorado Air National Guard held an appreciation luncheon for the 9Health Fair at its headquarters.

Unit members have been supporting the health fair by transporting supplies all over Colorado for years.

“We wanted to highlight and show our gratitude for the relationships we’ve built with the 9Heath communities and volunteers across the entire state of Colorado over the years,” said Master Sgt. Dan Martinez, 137th SWS 9Health coordinator. “Events like these help strengthen partnerships and we want members of the community to know that we’re here and a very involved part not only in the Greeley community but across the state,” he added.

In addition to the 9Health work the squadron does, they also participate in various other volunteer activities such as Relay for Life, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, University of Northern Colorado Campus Clean-up as well as perform oil changes for single moms. 

It's mandatory, it's safe and it's **FREE**

By Army Capt. Ken Walsh, Colorado Army National Guard Safety
and Air Force Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares, Colorado National Guard Public
Affairs With Army Maj. Keith A. Robinson, CONG Staff Judge Advocate

ATTENTION ALL MOTORCYCLE RIDERS

Did you know you are required to complete the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic Rider Course? It's per AR 385-10, AFI 91-207, NGR 385-10, and the DODI 6055.4. While the process is different for Soldiers and Airmen, the good news is, it's free.

Soldiers can visit: <http://nm.msf-usa.org/msf/ridercourses.aspx?state=CO>, choose your preferred class location, then call Army Capt. Ken Walsh or Chief Warrant Officer 4 Drew Zanoft of the Colorado Army National Guard Safety & Occupational Health Office at (720) 847-8452/8468 in order to coordinate payment before attending.

There's even more good news: Once you complete the BRC, you have the option to complete any follow on motorcycle course for free. That includes the Advanced Rider, Sport Bike Rider, etcetera, because want you to be safe riders.

What Colorado law says

By Army Maj. Keith A. Robinson
CONG Staff Judge Advocate

In Colorado, the law states that only those persons under 18 who are operating or are passengers on motorcycles must wear helmets. If you're 18 or over, no helmet is required in Colorado. This applies off-post. At a minimum, however, Colorado law requires all motorcycle operators and passengers to wear goggles or eyeglasses with lenses made of safety glass or safety plastic unless wearing a helmet with built-in eye protection made of safety glass or safety plastic.

There is no question that a commander has the authority to require helmets, vests, glasses or other personal protective equipment on base. However, I would argue that a commander also has the ability to order helmets be worn at all times – even off-post – since the Colorado Code of Military Justice applies to us all at all times, whether on duty status or not. Enforcement then becomes an issue along with morale and liberty interests and I can understand if a commander doesn't want to push his authority that far.

If a commander does not want to order helmets be worn at all times, even off-duty and off-post, then I would recommend a policy that requires helmets off-post but during duty hours, which includes trips from home to duty on drill weekends.

We have medical coverage the moment we leave our drive-ways on our way to drill and in my opinion, since we are on duty, the commander does have authority to require that motorcycles riders wear helmets as a protective, safety, health and welfare measure, even if this means going to and from home on drill weekends.

Airmen should contact Chief Master Sgt. Gerald James, 140th Wing Safety, at (720) 847-9738 to get started.

Your process will start when you send him some basic information (name, rank, status). He'll write a letter that you'll take that letter to the 460th Space Wing Safety Office. There, you'll complete a checklist and a safety briefing, then you'll choose a course from one of three contract vendors.

Airmen must pay for the class in advance but will be reimbursed upon successful completion of the course. The reimbursement process starts when an Airman returns his or her checklist, the MSF card and receipt to the 460th Safety office.

Operating your motorcycle on or off a DOD installation:

In addition to carrying your MSF card while operating your motorcycle, the following personal protective equipment MUST be worn while operating your motorcycle on a DOD installation, and is highly encouraged at all other times for your protection These are the regulatory minimums that apply to mopeds, scooters and all-terrain vehicles. Check with each installation for additional requirements. **Head Protection:**

A helmet designed to meet or exceed Department of Transportation standards, must be worn and properly fastened under the chin.

Eye Protection: Goggles, wrap-around glasses, or a full-face shield (properly attached to helmet) designed to meet or exceed American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard Z87.1 for impact and shatter resistance must be worn. A windshield alone does not constitute proper eye protection.

Protective Clothing: A long-sleeve shirt or jacket, long trousers and full-fingered gloves are required. Gloves should be a sturdy, non-slip type to permit a firm grip on the controls. Motorcycle jacket and pants constructed of abrasion-resistant materials such as leather, Kevlar®, and or Cordura®, and containing impact-absorbing padding, are strongly encouraged. The synthetic materials offer equal – and sometimes greater protection – than leather at half the weight, and can help keep you cool during Colorado's hot summers.

Foot Protection: Riders must wear sturdy over-the-ankle footwear that affords protection for the feet and ankles (durable athletic shoes that cover the ankles may also be worn). Sandals, low quarter sneakers or similar footwear cannot be worn.

Garment and Motorcycle Visibility: Motorcycle riders must wear brightly-colored outer upper garments during the day and reflective upper garments at night. The outer upper garment must be visible and not covered. Wearing a backpack is authorized if it's brightly colored or has reflective properties.



Military social media policies seek solution to leverage benefits with risk

By Deborah Grigsby Smith
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

When the Department of Defense released its long-awaited policy on social media, the idea was to help clarify guidance on the official use of increasingly popular web-based networking sites – also known as Web 2.0.

The policy, which became effective Feb. 26, was designed to dispel ambiguity surrounding official endorsement of online social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The nine-page “Directive-Type Memorandum 09-026” states it is now DOD policy the NIPRNET – or non-classified network – be “configured to provide Internet-based capabilities across all DOD components.”

Gasp!

The decision to open military networks to these sites comes at a time when there’s growing concern among leadership regarding both operational security as well as cybersecurity.

However, Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn III, suggests in a recent DOD statement that the benefits – if handled properly – may outweigh the risks.

“This directive recognizes the importance of balancing appropriate security measures while maximizing the capabilities afforded by 21st century Internet tools,” said Lynn.

Prior to the release, individual services, as well as other DOD components, were writing and implementing their own policies. Unfortunately, there was little standardization or consistency across the board. For users it seemed to cause much more confusion than it did clarification. For example, some components could access Twitter, but not Facebook. Others could only view YouTube.

Some components prohibited social media altogether.

However, while DOD leadership and security experts now weigh the benefits against the risks of social media, commanders and public affairs officers are working hard to define and implement local guidance that is both practical and firmly aligned with the wishes of DOD.

Sounds cool, huh?

Well, curb the enthusiasm because DOD’s new policy doesn’t exactly open the floodgates entirely.

It has some pretty powerful built-in caveats executable at the local level. For starters, all sites associated with gambling, pornography and hate crimes are still prohibited from government computers. Local commanders are also able to temporarily suspend network access to social media sites for both security as well as bandwidth concerns.

“Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter

are rapidly changing the way we work, engage with our Soldiers, Airmen, and families. It also helps us leverage the power of our strategic partners at the community, state and national level,” said Maj. Elena O’Bryan, Colorado National Guard State Public Affairs Officer. “While social media tools bring with them a whole new world of opportunity, they also evoke a whole new world of responsibility as it enables the user – in short – to enter into a conversation with the entire world.”

But could social media in the military put operational security, as well as personnel at risk?

Lt. Gen William B. Caldwell, the current commander, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, as well as, commanding general, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, suggests the operational risks from social media are really no different than any other operational risk commanders already face.

“Operational security is an enduring concern for military operations,” explained Caldwell in a recent interview with IO Sphere, the professional journal of joint information operations published by the Joint Information Operations Warfare Command in San Antonio, Texas.

“However, we cannot take counsel of our fears at the expense of new media applications. As always, we must strike a balance between caution and engagement,” he continued. “As new technologies continue to emerge, there will be even more challenges to the risk-benefit balance. If we surrender to our fears, we surrender a big chunk of the high media ground. Commanders accept risk in any operation. We are not talking about rejection of risk, but rather about the parameters of the risk, we’re willing to accept. With the emphasis, senior leaders are placing on Web 2.0, I remain confident the Army will find the proper balance.”

So, is social media compatible with the military?

Col. Dana M. Capozzella, commander of the Colorado Army National Guard says yes.

“Yes, in a limited and monitored capacity,” said Capozzella via e-mail. “We must never compromise our security for ease of communication. At the same time, we need to understand and accept that this is the new way people are communicating and staying connected.”

Many well-known and high-ranking DOD leaders have taken the social media plunge themselves, including Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. You can join him – and the 19,500 people who follow him – on Twitter @thejointstaff. Or check in on General Odierno,

commander of U.S. Forces-Iraq on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/RayOdierno>. Odierno has close to 9,000 fans.

Even Air Force Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, has become a mover and shaker across the “Twitterverse” these days. Follow and connect with him on Twitter @ChiefNGB.

McKinley, who penned an article late last year in The Federal Times entitled “Why I Tweet,” speaks frankly about how and why he embraces the wonders of Web 2.0. The chief suggests the humble 140-character tweet may soon evolve into the new commander’s coin.

“When I’m traveling, I give out a lot of coins to Soldiers and Airmen who demonstrate excellence,” he said. “For the new generation, a tweet is the electronic equivalent of that coin – publicly recognizing their achievements in front of people who matter to them: their followers.”

McKinley also adds that Twitter is an excellent way to generate excitement among reporters and bloggers.

“I’ll tweet about a meeting with a foreign visitor, or an ongoing domestic support mission, or an upcoming event,” he continued. “The public affairs teams in my office and in the various states, as well as the traditional media and bloggers that follow me, often pick up these stories and push them out as news.”

But again, how can operational risks be reduced?


According to security experts, one the most effective – and inexpensive – means to mitigate operational security risk is discretion. That, coupled with proper oversight, and good judgment are the first lines of defense.

“It is unfortunate that privacy and operational security issues currently lag behind advancing technology,” said Harley Rinerson, chief information officer, Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. “However, simply understanding how to properly use – as well as the global implications – of using social media in the work place is a good start.”

Rinerson goes on to suggest that the old fashion OPSEC model is – and should be – very much alive, even in a world driven by near-real time communication.

“So the technology has changed,” he quipped, “but the information our adversaries want pretty much remains the same. Never post anything that falls within what’s called PII or personally identifiable information: things like addresses, phone numbers, and detailed travel itineraries; also any information that might help an adversary build a more complete picture of force structure and force structure procedures such as training schedules, deployment dates and points of departure.”

Currently, the promise of social media for the Colorado National Guard is still under evaluation by senior leadership and technology experts. A draft policy has been prepared to provide guidance to all Colorado Guardsmen on the responsible use of this this capability, and is currently under staff review.

“Social media could lead to better informed Soldiers and Airmen as they will be able to access information concerning benefits in a medium that appeals to the younger generation,” concluded Capozzella. “Our younger Guardsmen and women are comfortable and adept at navigating in this medium [social media] – we just need to catch up.” 



The Colorado National Guard 101st Army Band is scheduled to start its annual tour in June. The band will perform these free, public concerts at events across the state.


Share your pride and patriotism with your families and friends as you relax and enjoy Big Band, concert, country, rock and Dixieland music.

Veterans will also receive special recognition at every event.

- Greeley (St. Michaels Town Square) - June 4, 7:00 p.m.
- Berthoud - June 5, 11:00 a.m. for the parade march, noon for the concert
- Fitzsimmons VA Hospital - June 6, time to be determined
- Denver People’s Fair (Main Stage) - June 6, 12:30 p.m.
- Brighton Armory - June 16, 7:00 p.m.
- Englewood Civic Center - June 17, 6:30 p.m.
- Frisco Gazebo - June 18, 1:00 p.m.
- Glenwood Springs (Strawberry Days) - June 19, all day (including marching in a parade to kick off the event)
- Grand Junction VA Hospital - June 20, 12:00 p.m.
- Rifle VA Hospital - June 20, time to be determined
- Montrose Pavilion - June 21, 6:30 p.m.
- Ouray Wright Opera House - June 22, 7:00 p.m.
- Ouray Gazebo - June 22, 8:00 p.m.
- Silverton - June 23, 7:00 p.m.
- Gunnison - Western State Band Shell - June 24, 7:00 p.m.
- Lake City Armory - June 25, 6:30 p.m.
- Salida - John Held Auditorium - June 26, 1:30 p.m.

101starmyband.com

http://bands.army.mil/webschedule.asp?date=next_90&band=101AB&location=ALL

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/edit/?id=244699778764#!/pages/101st-Army-Band-Colorado-National-Guard/244699778764> 



Organizational overhaul

Personnel directorate makeover equals more professional, efficient team

By Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

Above & Beyond articles profile Soldiers and Airmen who go out of their way to excel as citizens and Guardsmen. Anyone may nominate a peer to be featured in Above & Beyond based on the Guardsman's merits; not only as a servicemember, but also as a citizen. Colorado National Guard's Above & Beyond articles are forwarded on to the National Guard Bureau's Above & Beyond program.

They don't have glamorous jobs by any means, but without them, Colorado Army National Guardsmen's promotions and retirement funds, among a host of other records, wouldn't be tracked. They make up the personnel directorate (G1), and are an integral part of the organization.

The component's senior enlisted leadership team of five was nominated by State Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Lousberg as this month's Above & Beyond Soldiers.

Some time ago, Lousberg saw a directorate in need of fresh ideas and leadership at the senior noncommissioned officer level.

Lousberg said the team resurrected confidence in the personnel directorate after a tumultuous two-year period.

"This team came in and took over a process that was less than adequate and had pretty much fallen to pieces, from the enlisted promotions side of the house to general records keeping," Lousberg said. "They picked up the pieces and took ownership of it and worked night and day to fix it. They helped re-write an entire new promotion pamphlet for the state, helped institute an automated (promotion) boarding system and brought back the confidence of Guardsmen within their G1 section."

The team, comprised of Sgt. Maj. Russell Hamilton, Master Sgt. Jeanine Williams, Sgt. 1st Class Cory Fynboh, Sgt. 1st Class Frankie Gomez and Sgt. 1st Class Justin VanValkenburg, provide enlisted leadership and guidance for the 36-person G1 directorate. Each one was hand-picked by Lousberg for his or her respective role and was expected to demonstrate a higher standard than his or her predecessor.

Hamilton, 41, comes from a 16-year background in the active duty Army armor and also spent time as a recruiter and a missileer in the COARNG's 100th Missile Defense Brigade. He's been the G1 sergeant major since June 2009 and provides oversight specifically to the NCOs of the directorate.

Gomez, 36, was a munitions specialist for 11 years in the active duty Army, then joined the COARNG's 8th Civil Support Team before he was recruited to his current position as the health systems specialist noncommissioned officer in charge in November 2009.

Williams, 47, spent seven years in the active duty Army as a human resource specialist and three years as a recruiter. For the majority of her 24-year career, she has worked in personnel. She joined the G1 in September 2009 and is the enlisted personnel management NCOIC.



The personnel directorate (G1) of the Colorado Army National Guard poses in front of Joint Force Headquarters-Colorado in Centennial, Colo., April 27.

Army photo by Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

Fynboh, 33, joined the COARNG in 1998 as a vehicle mechanic before becoming an HR specialist. He has been the personnel services center (military records) NCOIC since September 2009.

VanValkenburg, 30, joined the COARNG in 1997 as a cannon crewmember in the field artillery, then cross-trained into the electronic maintenance and calibrations career field as an operator and maintainer. He later became an HR specialist as has been with the G1 since April 2009 as its enlisted promotions NCOIC.

HG: Explain this "tumultuous two-year period" that Command Sgt. Maj. Lousberg is talking about before all of you became a team.

Williams: There were really no set standards for the G1. The sergeant major set specific goals within each of the sections and hired the right people to hold up the standards.

Hamilton: Before, things were not always done in a well-broadcast manner, and there was no transparency in what was being done, so there was a lot of skepticism. Things were being done that weren't supported by regulations or weren't fair and equitable across the board. There was a lot of doubt in the field as to what was really going on.

HG: What improvements have all of you seen since coming on board the G1 directorate?

Williams: The whole G1 works as a team now. All the NCOs can do someone else's job, so there's not a single point of failure anymore. If someone is gone, we have coverage. I also see a lot of support to the field and more interaction with other sections, like the pay branch and the battalion administrative offices.

Hamilton: The feedback to date that we've received from the units in the field has been very appreciative in our formalizing of processes and our communication. For example, we've established a monthly G1 newsletter to help communicate new policies and

procedures, key events, and updates coming from the National Guard Bureau. We want the units in the field to know that we are not just working up here (Colorado National Guard state headquarters) just taking care of the people that we feel like taking care of, but that we are truly taking care of all of the Soldiers in the COARNG.


Fynboh: Within my section alone, I had 15 temporary technicians who were just doing their own thing and it kind of bled into everybody else. Now I see that we're coming together and are more disciplined. Two of the biggest accomplishments in my section that I'm most proud of is that we've got the enlisted record briefs out now, and the increase of personnel services design redelivery training that pushes former G1 tasks down to brigade and battalion levels.

VanValkenburg: We've come out of the Stone Age from an enlisted promotions process that was absolutely broken. We started using the National Guard Automated Board System, which takes all

the board's point tallies and automates them into a closed database that allows the board to be able to vote on those records.

Also, there's a new sense of pride and workmanship with the Soldiers and civilians in the G1 that was nonexistent before. I think they realize how important their job is now. It's not a glorious job and they're not in the field as much, but they're still important.

Gomez: The biggest thing for me is to know that our promotions are going to be handled fairly and the paperwork isn't going to get lost on purpose. There's also more organization up in the G1. In my section, the HSS, I have two good Soldiers who are very smart but they were lacking confidence due to lack of support, so I came in and taught them a little leadership and it pushed up their confidence level.

Lousberg: Our COARNG G1 team stood up to the plate and took ownership of a process in need of change and turned it back around. From the outside looking in, it's truly become a cohesive organization. Everyone is going in the same direction now. 

Governor signs bill benefiting military installations

By Air Force Maj. Kristin Haley
140th Wing Public Affairs

DENVER (5/21/10) — Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter signed a bill into law that increases cooperation between military installations and local government officials on land use, zoning and development issues.

House Bill 10-1205, sponsored by Rep. Su Ryden and Sen. Nancy Spence, whose districts include Buckley Air Force Base, is the first of its kind in 37 years.

"We are extremely thankful for the support of our state legislature," said Brig Gen. Trulan Eyre, 140th Wing Commander, Colorado Air National Guard. "This bill goes a long way to protect military missions from the unintended consequences of growth. We have a voice now to make sure it's smart growth," he added.

Representative Nancy Todd, Colorado Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee Chair spoke about the huge economic boost that military installations provide as well as the investment our cities and counties have in these installations pointing out military installations provide in excess of \$4.6 billion annually across the state of Colorado. "House Bill 1205 will become an example and model for other states. Protecting our military installations is critical in the name of national defense and is about our shared security" she said.


"House Bill 1205 reinforces the message that the



Gov. Bill Ritter signs House Bill 1201 May 21. The bill improves cooperation between military installations and government officials on land use, development and zoning issues.

Air Force photo by Maj. Kristin Haley

military is very important to Colorado," added Ritter. "We have numerous military installations throughout the state, and this new law will help ensure these installations can continue their mission even as our state's communities continue to grow."

"I am proud that Buckley is in my district," said Rep. Su Ryden. Military bases are exceptionally important to Colorado, and we want to ensure their continued well-being. At the same time, we want to be perfectly transparent about their impacts on local communities." 

Parting shot



A patriotic parachutist tows an American flag into a Memorial Day celebration following the annual Bolder Boulder 10 kilometer road race May 31 in front of a packed crowd at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colo. Five other parachutists dropped into the ceremony, each one towing a flag representing the different service branches.

Army photo by Spc. Joseph K. VonNida